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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 25th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. TSHERING	(Bhutan)
later:	Mrs. TAVARES DE ÁLVAREZ (Vice-Chairman)	(Dominican Republic)
later:	Mr. TSHERING (Chairman)	(Bhutan)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 109: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS (continued) (A/50/3, A/50/12 and Add.1, A/50/413, A/50/414, A/50/555 and A/50/275-S/1995/555)

1. Mr. RODRIGO (Sri Lanka) said that despite the vast scale and spread of humanitarian problems relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had accomplished much throughout the world, in cooperation with the countries directly involved, thanks to the practical approach which it used.

2. The dedication and determination shown by the High Commissioner and her staff in many trying, even desperate situations deserved recognition. The situation was not, however, completely bleak, because some 2 million persons had returned home in safety and dignity to countries like Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Myanmar. The commencement of a peace process in the former Yugoslavia offered reasonable hope for resolution of the plight of the refugees and displaced persons in that country. At the previous meeting of the Working Group on Humanitarian Issues of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, it had been agreed that UNHCR should carry on as coordinator of humanitarian assistance following a peaceful settlement.

3. Referring to the UNHCR report (A/50/12, para. 133), she said that the return from India to Sri Lanka of Senegalese refugees had been greatly facilitated by the practical assistance rendered by UNHCR in keeping with its essentially humanitarian and non-political character, and she indicated that the repatriation programme was continuing on a slow but steady course.

4. She drew attention to the current problem of the forced displacement of persons within Sri Lanka and attributed that situation to the actions of a secessionist group called the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which earlier in 1995 had turned its back on the option for settling the country's ethnic issues through a process of peaceful negotiations, an option freely supported by all other political parties and groups in the country and welcomed by the international community. That group, afraid of losing control of Jafna and its population, had ordered the forcible evacuation of the city.

5. The Government of Sri Lanka had endeavoured to reduce to the absolute minimum the hardships forced on the peoples concerned, and to that end it had taken steps to ensure that they received food, medicine and other essential items without interruption and in sufficient quantities, although the aforementioned secessionist group was diverting a substantial part of that assistance for its own war effort. Nevertheless, the Government had held discussions with the International Committee of the Red Cross to ensure the uninterrupted distribution of supplies and had established a focal point for coordination which would channel assistance from those agencies and organizations whose aid the Government might choose to enlist. The efforts of the Sri Lankan Government had been duly appreciated by the United Nations

Children's Fund (UNICEF) and by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons.

6. Mrs. Tavares de Álvarez (Dominican Republic), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

7. Mr. ADWAN (Jordan) said that in recent times the world had witnessed an alarming increase in the number of refugees and displaced persons, which was taxing the capacity of UNHCR to fulfil its mandate. Jordan was interested in the refugee and displaced persons issue because it was the country in which the largest number of Palestinian refugees lived, refugees who had arrived in three waves since 1948, and who were an additional burden on the country's public services and infrastructure.

8. His delegation believed that the Palestinian refugee problem was a fundamentally political one and its result was a human tragedy. His delegation would treat the Palestinian problem in detail in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee when it studied the report of the High Commissioner of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

9. After praising the work of UNHCR and its staff in alleviating the refugee situations which had resulted from the problems in the Great Lakes region of Africa, the former Yugoslavia and other areas, he said that Jordan supported the Office's implementation of the triple strategy of preparation, prevention and solution in emergency situations.

10. Referring to the burden represented by the refugee problem for some host countries, he stressed that the problem was aggravated by the fact that some of those host countries were among the poorest countries and were faced with chronic economic problems. He pointed out the importance of the work of UNHCR in coordinating the assistance provided by governmental and non-governmental organizations with the setting up of development programmes in those countries, which placed humanitarian questions within a development perspective.

11. The preservation of human dignity was a fundamental value. Accordingly, he stressed the need to link refugee problems with more general human rights interests. In that context it was important that current mechanisms be reinforced, including the establishment of international tribunals to judge the alleged violators of human rights and humanitarian law.

12. His Government was convinced that one of the most important tasks was that of guaranteeing adequate supplies of food and medicine to refugees, especially vulnerable groups like the elderly, children and women. It was proud of its participation in the peace-keeping operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mozambique, Angola and other parts of the world.

13. He underlined the role of non-governmental organizations in providing assistance to refugees to alleviate the suffering of innocent victims and referred to the humanitarian work undertaken by the Hashemite Humanitarian Assistance Committee. Finally, he said that States were currently faced with a choice: to be part of a harmonious international system whose regional and

international efforts were based on human morality, or to remain indifferent to sedition, ethnic cleansing and ideological hostility.

14. Mr. AMOR (Tunisia) reaffirmed Tunisia's commitment to provide all necessary assistance to United Nations refugee-related activities. The humanitarian crises and their brutality, especially in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, were unacceptable human tragedies. Fully aware of the seriousness of those problems and of their political, economic and social consequences, his delegation had studied in detail the UNHCR report and welcomed the efforts made to encourage repatriation in various regions. It also welcomed the improvement in the prospects for voluntary repatriation which had resulted from the regional conferences organized by UNHCR, which had facilitated the approval of concrete plans of action.

15. He was pleased to note the return to their homeland of a large number of Mozambican, Ethiopian and Chadian refugees as well as preparations for the voluntary repatriation programme for Togolese refugees. He also hoped that similar solutions could be found so that Malian and Angolan refugees would have the same opportunity.

16. He was especially concerned by the strikingly large number of refugees and displaced persons being cared for by UNHCR and by the fact that Africa accounted for nearly half of the total. Most of those persons were women and children who had been the principal victims of mass exoduses. He believed that protection for those vulnerable groups should be reinforced and that they should be guaranteed treatment without discrimination in the refugee camps.

17. It was essential for the international community to define and implement a global approach to refugee problems, based on prevention, the reduction of the negative effects of the presence of refugees on the host country and the search for durable solutions, in order to alleviate the suffering of millions of human beings and prevent other humanitarian crises. His delegation was fully convinced that economic development alone was not enough to prevent humanitarian crises, and that political efforts were required to promote respect for human rights, the rule of law and responsible management of public affairs. Host countries were generally experiencing serious economic difficulties, which were aggravated by the influx of refugees. The international community should show solidarity towards those countries, since durable solutions to such problems required the mobilization of substantial financial and human resources, exceeding the capacity of any one State or of a small group of States.

18. Durable solutions must be found, and repatriation could be successful only if the political situation was such that it favoured the re-establishment of peace and the reconstruction of countries and societies in crisis. An integrated approach to political, humanitarian and development issues was needed in order to solve the problems of refugees, and UNHCR had devoted laudable efforts to promoting such a approach.

19. He urged the international community to respond effectively to the refugee problem and reiterated that efficient interventions and durable results required proper coordination of UNHCR activities in emergency situations with the activities of other United Nations organizations.

20. Mr. SY (Observer for the Organization of African Unity) said that the question of refugees, returnees and displaced persons had always figured prominently on the agenda of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), not only because a third of those people were hosted by Africa but also because OAU was very much concerned by the suffering and misery endured by the millions of uprooted Africans living a life of precarity, uncertainty, dependency, fear and deprivation.

21. The refugee crisis in Africa was not only a humanitarian problem but a source of insecurity and tension and a serious obstacle to subregional and regional economic cooperation and integration. It also necessitated the use of important human, material and environmental resources. It was therefore necessary to attack the root causes of the continuing flows of refugees. Taking that into account, the African heads of State and Government had put forward three priorities in their 1990 declaration on the political and socio-economic situation in Africa, namely, the speedy resolution of all conflicts on the continent, the further democratization of African societies and the promotion of African economic recovery, development and integration.

22. OAU had set up a mechanism for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, which was currently operating with a view to finding peaceful solutions to the major conflicts afflicting Africa, particularly in Burundi, Liberia and Somalia. The post-cold-war era had unleashed disintegrative forces which had created conflicts; that called for a permanent role for regional organizations in the prevention and settlement of those conflicts. However, the requirements of large-scale emergencies such as those in Somalia and Rwanda were beyond the capacity of any regional organization. OAU had therefore given priority to the enhancement of its cooperation with the United Nations in the areas of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping, as well as its conflict resolution capacity.

23. In its efforts to find lasting solutions to refugee problems, OAU had done everything possible to ensure implementation of the provisions of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, it disseminated material on human rights and supported the work of the OAU Commission on Human and People's Rights. It was also promoting an accelerated economic growth and recovery programme. It was not a mere coincidence that the prolonged economic recession of the 1980s had been followed by a period of political strife, ethnic violence and civil wars. Socio-economic development was thus one of the keys to the long-term solution of the refugee crisis.

24. OAU had also undertaken specific actions to encourage the voluntary return of refugees to their places of origin. For example, in February 1995, it had organized, in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a regional conference on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in the Great Lakes region, held in Bujumbura. UNHCR had made laudable efforts in the preparation and holding of that conference, but the same could not be said of the rest of the international community, which had failed to respond with sufficient resources. In the same context, the OAU Council of Ministers had supported the proposal to convene a

regional conference on peace, security, stability and development, with a view to attacking the root causes of the refugee problem in the Great Lakes region.

25. It was necessary to strengthen the operational capacity of the United Nations in the area of human rights. That effort should include operationalizing the international tribunals designed to prosecute the perpetrators of grave violations of human rights and humanitarian law. In addition, the obstacles barring access to asylum, at times based on racial and xenophobic attitudes, should be removed.

26. As far as resources were concerned, his delegation had been pleased to note that in 1994, a change had occurred in the downward trend in the funding of UNHCR general programmes. However, resources for special operations were far less than what was needed. Concerning the particular case of Africa, the countries of the region had shown enormous generosity in granting asylum to the millions of refugees and displaced persons, the majority of whom were women, children and the elderly. However, the symptoms of hospitality fatigue in the host countries were increasingly evident, not because of any change of attitude, but rather because the burden of that generosity was becoming heavier and the means of sustaining it were constantly diminishing. The international community should therefore fulfil its commitment to the countries of asylum to alleviate the difficult situation of refugees.

27. A number of OAU member States had made considerable efforts to encourage the voluntary repatriation of refugees. However, a permanent solution to the problem required a global approach taking into account the various dimensions of the crisis, an effective cooperation among the actors and new and more effective ways of mobilizing resources.

28. Mr. NOGUERA (Guatemala), speaking on behalf of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, recalled that by its resolution 49/137, dated 19 December 1994, the General Assembly had reiterated its appreciation to UNHCR for the assistance it had provided to Central America. That valuable international support and solidarity committed the countries of the region to redouble their efforts to carry out the process of repatriation and resettlement of refugees in the most rapid and orderly way possible. The resolution referred to a number of initiatives which had been undertaken in order to attain those objectives, such as the Declaration of Commitments in Favour of the Populations Affected both by Uprootedness and by Conflicts and Extreme Poverty, within the Framework of Consolidating Peace in Central America; the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America; and the International Conference on Central American Refugees.

29. Although more than a year had passed since the conclusion of the process begun by that Conference, in which UNHCR had acted as lead agency, the situation still called for efforts by the Governments of the region and support from UNHCR, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations system as a whole, as well as the work being done in the region by non-governmental organizations, so that it would be possible to carry out the activities designed to provide an integrated response to programmes of self-sufficiency, reintegration, and repatriation with economic reincorporation of refugees and displaced persons.

30. It should be noted that the six Central American States were parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, and that they implemented its provisions without geographical limits. It was regrettable that a large number of countries had still not acceded to those two instruments, including countries of origin and receiving countries. The countries of Central America were also concerned at the trend among developed countries to be increasingly strict in granting asylum.

31. With regard to the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/50/12), the countries of Central America had noted with concern the increase in refugee flows in various parts of the world, especially as that phenomenon was mostly affecting women and children. Nevertheless, it was encouraging that the situation had been considered a high priority at the Fourth World Conference on Women and that there was an international consensus on the need to take specific measures to deal with it. The countries of Central America urged the donor community and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to continue supporting the work of UNHCR aimed at resolving that sensitive issue.

32. Mr. HABIYAREMYE (Rwanda) said that when people talked of refugees, attention was focused on Africa and, particularly, the Great Lakes region, which included Rwanda, a country that had recently witnessed the massive exodus of its people to neighbouring countries as a result of war and, especially, genocide. Explaining the current phenomenon of Rwandan refugees, he said that the former regime had waged a propaganda campaign to make it appear that the population was spontaneously fleeing the country before the advance of the Rwanda Patriotic Army, which announced a political change resulting from the liberation struggle of the Rwanda Patriotic Front and other political forces which had refused to obey the order to eliminate ethnic Tutsis and to kill Hutu political opponents.

33. As a precaution against possible political and military defeat, the members of the old regime had determined to displace the whole population in order to cover their retreat and at the same time conceal the extent of the genocide and killings, which had cost the lives of more than one million people in barely three months. In that way, a human shield had been formed which, by its sheer size, continued to protect the real criminals. It was regrettable that some members of the international community had fallen into that trap.

34. It was difficult to understand how the statistics of the humanitarian organizations invariably showed the same number of two million Rwandan refugees since the beginning of the massive exodus, when it was clear that some of the organizations, especially those responsible for repatriation, continued to supply data on returnees in order to justify having been in Rwanda for over a year. Its a serious political argument that should be clarified once and for all, in order to put an end to all speculation and manipulation. To do that, two questions had to be asked. First, if UNHCR needed to know the exact number of refugees so that it could administer humanitarian aid more effectively, the reluctance of the refugees to participate in the relevant census had to be explained. Second, if UNHCR knew the number of people in each camp at the end of March 1995, as was claimed in paragraph 54 of document A/50/413 on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa, a reason had to be given

for not making the exact numbers of Rwandan refugees in each country and each camp available to the international community.

35. His Government reiterated its determination to do everything in its power to facilitate the safe return of all refugees, in accordance with the Declaration of Bujumbura and the various tripartite agreements between Rwanda, UNHCR and each of the neighbouring countries sheltering Rwandan refugees, namely, Zaire, Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania. Every effort would be made to ensure that all Rwandans enjoyed the same rights of citizenship and government protection.

36. With regard to the loss of momentum in voluntary repatriation, paragraph 101 of the report of the High Commissioner (A/50/12) referred to an increase in the number of security incidents in Rwanda, the high number of arrests of alleged participants in the 1994 genocide and the absence of a credible judicial system. As far as the incidents mentioned were concerned, they were part of the overall problem of the security situation in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region, which could be attributed to the lack of implementation of the recommendations on the issue made at the regional summit on Rwanda, held in Nairobi, and at the Regional Conference held in Bujumbura. Those recommendations referred to the need to separate ordinary refugees from the alleged participants in the genocide and the groups which were intimidating refugees in the camps. Clearly, the implementation of those recommendations fell to the countries of asylum and not to the Rwandan side.

37. On the subject of the high number of arrests, it had to be pointed out that they were in proportion to the range of crimes committed and the number of perpetrators. All those who took part in criminal activities had to be arrested if the principles of a State based on the rule of law, which involved respect for human rights and the elimination of impunity, were to be upheld.

38. Although the absence of a credible judicial system was patently obvious, in the light of his Government's constant efforts, not without success, to restore its judicial system as quickly as possible, it was unjust to claim that the country had done nothing to try to ensure that its judicial system not only inspired confidence but also functioned effectively.

39. His delegation put forward the following recommendations to the international community with the aim of tackling the problem of the Rwandan refugees. First, it should demand that the former members of the armed forces and other paramilitary forces sheltering in the countries bordering on Rwanda in the guise of Rwandan refugees should be totally disarmed without delay. The international community should also ensure that all State property was returned to Rwanda, which would help to stabilize Rwanda in particular, and the whole subregion in general.

40. Second, the international community should play an active part in restoring Rwanda's judicial system and in bringing into operation the International Tribunal for Rwanda, while collaborating with the Government in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 978 (1995) on the arrest and detention of alleged participants in the genocide. Third, the receiving countries should encourage refugees to return voluntarily to their

countries of origin; in the meantime they should continue to supply them with aid, with the support of the international community, for the sake of security throughout the region as well as for the benefit of the refugees themselves. Lastly, the international community should continue to participate in the resettlement of refugees and the reconstruction of Rwanda's social and economic infrastructure.

41. His delegation was deeply grateful to the international community for the demonstrations of solidarity shown towards its country in general and the Rwandan refugees in particular. The initiatives taken by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, especially her recent visit to the region, were particularly noteworthy. It was to be hoped that her first-hand knowledge would allow her to stimulate greater interest on the part of the international community in the search for quick and appropriate solutions to the problem of the Rwandan refugees.

42. Mr. SAHRAOUI (Algeria) expressed his satisfaction with the measures taken by UNHCR with respect to refugees and displaced persons and his frustration at the fact that the problem affected as many as 28 million people. The unprecedented increase in the numbers of refugees was due largely to the rapid political, economic and social changes that had taken place in the world. Nationalism, ethnic, religious or tribal strife and territorial claims had engendered a chronically unstable situation. Moreover, macroeconomic factors which lay beyond the control of the countries of the southern hemisphere, where the vast majority of refugee populations were to be found, had impoverished those countries even further, leading to massive outflows of people seeking better living conditions.

43. It was necessary to combat the deep-seated problems which had given rise to refugee movements. His delegation endorsed the view of the High Commissioner for Refugees that a political and economic solution must be found to the problems causing population displacement and, therefore, he strongly supported the three-fold strategy of UNHCR of intervention, prevention and solutions. The success of that strategy would require the support of Governments, United Nations agencies and the competent governmental and non-governmental organizations.

44. Bearing in mind that refugee problems continued to worsen in Africa and were beyond the capacity of UNHCR, Algeria endorsed the latter's call for increased assistance to Africa and for the United Nations organizations, in particular the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), international financing institutions and the international community, to take concerted action to resolve the crisis.

45. Algeria, in keeping with its tradition of hospitality, had offered asylum to Saharan refugees who were waiting for the United Nations Settlement Plan for Western Sahara to be fully implemented with the help of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Algeria's humanitarian action was carried out in conjunction with assistance from UNHCR and international assistance provided on a bilateral basis by public and private agencies from various countries to Saharan refugees who hoped to return to their homeland in free and safe conditions under the auspices of UNHCR, in accordance with the repatriation

scheme provided for in the Settlement Plan. Algeria hoped that UNHCR would increase its assistance to that population in the future.

46. Algeria had also provided humanitarian assistance to people from Mali and Niger who had taken refuge in its territory. In the case of the refugees from Mali, implementation of a joint plan of action involving Mali, UNHCR and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) had been initiated in 1994 to help with the return and reintegration of refugees. With respect to the refugees from Niger, following consultations between the Governments of Niger and Algeria, UNHCR and IFAD, a protocol agreement had been adopted on a plan of action on refugees which would make it possible to solve the outstanding practical problems in order to enable the refugees to return to their home country under the best possible conditions.

47. Mrs. PHAM (Viet Nam) said that Viet Nam had not been immune to the overwhelming refugee crisis which had affected the entire world and had worsened in recent years as a result of poverty, regional or internal armed conflicts, political, economic and social crises, violence and intolerance. The Vietnamese people had suffered more than half a century of destructive wars, natural disasters and decades of economic embargo. Hence, a significant number of people had left their homes and fled to neighbouring countries in the hope of resettling in third countries.

48. At the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees held in Geneva in 1989, a Comprehensive Plan of Action had been adopted whereby countries of first asylum had the responsibility of screening Vietnamese asylum-seekers to determine if they qualified for refugee status. Under the terms of the Plan, some Governments had agreed to resettle those determined to be refugees whereas those not accepted were supposed to return to Viet Nam. Since then, Viet Nam, UNHCR and the other countries concerned had effectively implemented the Comprehensive Plan of Action, which had helped to put an end to the clandestine departures from the country. Between 1989 and 1995, 72,611 people had been voluntarily repatriated and, with international assistance and the enormous efforts made by the Government of Viet Nam, had been welcomed back to their original localities where they had been resettled and fully integrated into the community. Between 1991 and 1995, taking into account the appropriateness of the orderly return programmes, Viet Nam had signed agreements with Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand to facilitate the repatriation, in safety and dignity, and with international financial assistance, of persons not choosing to return voluntarily.

49. In mid-February, the Steering Committee of the Comprehensive Plan of Action had decided on the end of 1995 as a target date for termination of the Plan. Viet Nam was actively cooperating with UNHCR and other concerned countries to expedite the process. Recently, representatives of Viet Nam and the United States had met to discuss ways and means of repatriating the remaining 40,000 refugees in camps in South-East Asia.

50. In order to solve the problem and complete the Comprehensive Plan of Action by the deadline, it was essential that Viet Nam, UNHCR and other concerned countries should continue their active cooperation in assisting the returnees to become fully reintegrated into their communities. At the same time, voluntary

repatriation should be further encouraged. However, any feasible solution should be in keeping with the fundamental principles of national sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, and respect for national legislation, international law and internationally accepted practices. Viet Nam undertook to cooperate fully with UNHCR and all countries concerned to alleviate the plight of those vulnerable people.

51. Mr. Tshering (Bhutan) resumed the Chair.

52. Mr. JESSEN-PETERSEN (Director, UNHCR New York Liaison Office) said that he would inform the High Commissioner of the views expressed during the debate and thanked all the members of the Committee for the positive statements and expressions of support for UNHCR during the discussion of agenda item 109.

53. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had concluded its general discussion of agenda item 109.

AGENDA ITEM 105: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/C.3/50/L.11)

Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.11

54. The CHAIRMAN invited the members of the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.11 entitled "Progress made and problems encountered in the struggle against illiteracy: a mid-decade review - Cooperation to achieve education for all", and pointed out that the draft resolution did not have any programme budget implications.

55. Mr. DE BARROS (Secretary of the Committee) read out a revision to the draft resolution, whereby the words ", taking into account the possible measures, if any, to improve the reporting procedure;" would be added at the end of paragraph 8.

56. Mrs. ENKHTSETSEG (Mongolia) said that, although the draft resolution was almost identical to General Assembly resolution 46/93 of 16 December 1991, the reference to the role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was considered inadequate and it had been agreed to make the following changes: in paragraph 6, the words "to pursue, in cooperation with the other sponsors of" should be inserted after "International Literacy Year and", and the words ", the implementation of the World Declaration on Education for All;" should be added at the end of the paragraph. She announced that Bolivia, Costa Rica, Guyana, Jamaica, Malta, Niger and the Philippines had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

57. Mr. KHRYSKOV (Russian Federation) and Mr. DEGHANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that their countries wished to join the sponsors of the draft resolution.

58. Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.11, as orally revised, was adopted without a vote.

AGENDA ITEM 106: CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued)
(A/C.3/50/L.3, L.15 and L.16)

Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.3

59. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.3, entitled "Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders". The Economic and Social Council, by resolution 1995/8, had recommended that the General Assembly should adopt the draft resolution in question, which had no programme budget implications.

60. Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.3 was adopted without a vote.

61. Mr. MEKDAD (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his country had participated actively in the ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and that the resolutions approved at that Congress constituted one more step towards mobilizing international efforts to combat crime and eliminate criminality. During the drafting of the resolution on terrorism and organized crime, Syria had stated that it denounced and rejected terrorism in all its forms and that its laws dealt harshly with any person who committed acts of terrorism. Yet some countries chose not to make any distinction between terrorism, a despicable act, and the legitimate right of peoples to fight against foreign occupation, a right which the international community and the United Nations must continue to support as they had done when the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America had fought against foreign occupation and colonization.

62. The Syrian Arab Republic had requested that its views be reflected in the records of the ninth Congress and, although it was now joining the consensus concerning draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.3, it wished to emphasize the need, when the time came to carry out studies or set up intergovernmental working groups pursuant to resolution 4 of the ninth Congress, to distinguish between terrorism and the right of peoples to combat foreign occupation, especially since the General Assembly declaration on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations recognized the right of peoples to take legitimate action to combat foreign occupation.

63. Concerning the creation of a regional training and research centre on the prevention of crime and on criminal justice, Syria had stated time and time again, and repeated once more, that conditions were not right for such an initiative. The Syrian Arab Republic requested that its position on those issues be reflected fully in the records of the session.

Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.15

64. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.15, entitled "Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, particularly its technical cooperation capacity". The draft resolution would have no programme budget implications.

65. Mr. BUSACCA (Italy) said that a number of changes had been proposed. In the penultimate line of paragraph 9, the words "on a country by country basis"

should be added after the words "criminal justice systems". In the next to last line of paragraph 10, the words ", the Commission on the Status of Women" should be inserted after the words "Human Rights". In the fourth line of paragraph 11, the words "at the country level" should be inserted after the words "criminal justice", and in the fifth line of the same paragraph, the words "emphasizing social development aspects, and" should be inserted after the word "programmes,".

66. When Italy had introduced the draft resolution, Germany, Antigua and Barbuda, Cape Verde, Canada and Greece had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution. Afterwards Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, Iceland, Latvia, Malta, Philippines, Poland and Spain had added their names to the list of sponsors.

67. Ms. TAMLYN (United States of America) said that her delegation strongly supported the efforts of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.15 to strengthen the effectiveness of United Nations machinery to prevent crime internationally. The United States had joined with many other countries in supporting the transition from the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, consisting of independent experts, to an intergovernmental Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice under the authority of the Economic and Social Council. The General Assembly had enthusiastically approved the transition, with the expectation that the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch would receive from the new Commission practical and effective mandates which, in particular, would encourage greater technical cooperation. Her delegation supported the high priority attached to technical cooperation and advisory services in the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme.

68. However her delegation was not able, at that time, to support the upgrading of the Crime Branch to a division. She pointed out that the first resolution adopted by the Commission in 1992 had called for a strategic management plan that required the Secretariat to establish specific goals, priorities and timetables.

69. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, at its fourth session, had adopted a resolution which once again called on the Secretariat to comply with that strategic management plan, and to identify specific action plans for carrying out each of its mandates, including which body or entity would carry out each mandate, how much it would cost, how long it would take and what results would emerge.

70. She said that the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch must first show signs of its commitment to meeting those goals before an upgrading could be justified. The next Commission meeting would be a likely opportunity for the Branch to demonstrate its management and organizational potential. Nevertheless, since her delegation did not wish to stand in the way of consensus adoption of the draft resolution, she would not request a recorded vote.

71. Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.15 was adopted.

72. Mr. FELTON (United Kingdom) said that although crime prevention was a priority area for the United Kingdom and for the United Nations, the importance

of the issue did not translate automatically into an upgrading of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch. His delegation was not opposed in principle to upgrading the Branch, but before any decision was taken more information on the financial and administrative consequences should be available and all relevant facts should be given proper consideration. He therefore believed that the word "welcomes", in paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.15, was premature.

Draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.16

73. Mr. SOAL (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the African Group, introduced draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.16, entitled "United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders", and said that the draft resolution was essentially the same as the ones the Committee had adopted on the same subject in previous years.

74. The draft resolution commended the efforts of the Institute to fulfil its mandate despite the precarious financial situation it was facing. It also expressed appreciation to all Governments and intergovernmental organizations which had extended assistance to the Institute and appealed to those providing technical and financial support to continue doing so. The Secretary-General was also requested to provide the Institute with adequate funds from the United Nations programme budget as well as from extrabudgetary sources. In addition, it requested the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to resume support for the Institute, which was vital for the implementation of its mandated activities.

75. The African Group trusted that the draft resolution would once again receive overwhelming support from all delegations as a demonstration by the international community of its continued commitment to the full realization of the objectives set out by the General Assembly in the areas of crime prevention and programmes for Africa.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.